

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 0609

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE, PFOR, XG

SUBJECT: CSCE: CURRENT SOVIET ATTITUDES

1. SUMMARY. AT LUNCHEON WITH USDEL JAN 31, SOVIET DELEGATION WAS RELAXED AND FRIENDLY, BUT TOOK TOUGH LINE ON CBMS, BASKET III, AND QUESTION OF ALIGNMENT OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF CSCE TEXTS. SOVIETS IN EFFECT SAID WE COULD USE ANY ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION WE PREFERRED FOR INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN CONTACTS, BUT WOULD NOT AGREE TO ALTER RUSSIAN LANGUAGE VERSION. SOVIETS SAID THEY HAD NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN TOLD THAT PEACEFUL CHANGE LANGUAGE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION SOVIETS ALLUDED TO FACT THAT FINAL CSCE DOCUMENTS WOULD BE SIGNED BY THEIR "CHIEF OF STATE". END SUMMARY.

2. CMBS -- AT LUNCHEON WITH USDEL JAN 31, SOVIETS EXPLAINED THEIR VIEW OF NEOGITATIONSON CBMS, MAKING IT PLAIN THAT THEY CONSIDER THEIR PRESENT POSITION FORMS ADEQUATE BASIS FOR RESOLUTION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS ISSUE. WE POINTED OUT THAT WESTERN ALLIES ARE INCREASINGLY INTERESTED IN OBTAINING A REASONABLE SET OF PARAMETERS FOR A CBM ON MANEUVERS, AND THAT THIS IS A POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR WESTERN GOVERNMENTS, SINCE THEY WILL HAVE TO JUSTIFY AGREEMENTS ON MILITARY SUBJECTS TO THEIR PARLIAMENTS AND PUBLIC OPINION. SOVIET DEL SCOFFED
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AT AMBITIOUS WESTERN PROPOSALS, SAYINT CONFERENCE COULD

NOT ARRIVE AT SUCH FAR-REACHING CONCLUSIONS "JUST BECAUSE LICHTENSTEIN WANTS TO BE INFORMED." WE REMINDED SOVIETS THAT IT WAS NOT SIMPLY LICHTENSTEIN, BUT VIRTUALLY ALL WESTERN AND NEUTRAL PARTICIPANTS WHO BELIEVE MEANINGFUL MILITARY SECURITY CONTENT WOULD BE REQUIRED. THIS INCLUDED MAJOR WESTERN COUNTRIES, WHO WERE NOT INTERESTED IN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, BUT FOR WHOM REASONABLE MILITARY CONTENT OF CSCE FINAL DOCUMENTS WAS OF SOME IMPORTANCE. WE INDICATED THAT IT WAS OUR JUDGMENT THAT THIS DESIRE WOULD HAVE TO BE SATISFIED IF CSCE WAS TO REACH AN EARLY CONCLUSION. SOVIETS REPLIED THAT POLITICAL ARGUMENTS HAD NO PLACE IN THIS DISCUSSION, AND THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES SHOULD BE MORE BUSINESSLIKE AND TAKE A MORE PRACTICAL VIEW, AS SOVIETS HAD DONE.

3. BASKET III -- SOVIETS ALSO TOOK UNCOMPROMISING LINE ON PRINCIPAL CURRENT BASKET III ISSUE--THE HUMAN CONTACTS INTRODUCTORY TEXT. WE TOLD THEM THAT WE HAD INSTRUCTIONS WHICH PERMITTED US TO ACCEPT TEXT, BASED ON ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF FRENCH VERSION. LATER, OUR LANGUAGE EXPERTS INFORMED US THAT RUSSIAN VERSION DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY. WE SAID NEGOTIATIONS OF THIS ISSUE WOULD BE VASTLY SIMPLIFIED IF THE TWO TEXTS COULD BE ALIGNED. SOVIETS WENT THROUGH ELABORATE DOUBLE-TALK SCENARIO TO PROVE THAT FRENCH AND RUSSIAN VERSIONS WERE ACTUALLY THE SAME.

4. IN PRIVATE ASIDE TO AMBASSADOR SHERER, SOVIET DELEGATION HEAD KOVALEV INDICATED SOVIETS WOULD MAKE NO PROBLEM IF ENGLISH VERSION OF THIS TEXT WAS TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH VERSION, WITH IMPLICATION THAT THIS SHOULD SOLVE OUR PROBLEM. WE NOTED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS PRECISELY THE DIFFERENCE IN THE VARIOUS LANGUAGE VERSIONS, WHICH WOULD QUICKLY BE SPOTTED BY THE PRESS.

5. ALIGNMENTS OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF CSCE TEXTS--WE POINTED OUT TO SOVIETS THAT ALIGNMENT OF TWO LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF HUMAN CONTACTS INTRODUCTION WAS ONLY ONE PART OF LARGER PROBLEM OF ALIGNMENT OF

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VARIOUS LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF ALL CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS. WE INDICATED THAT WE HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THESE LANGUAGE VERSIONS CONFORM, AND THAT THIS WAS A REAL PROBLEM WE WOULD HAVE TO FACE UP TO SOONER OR LATER. SOVIETS CALLED THIS A "TIMEBOMB" TICKING AWAY UNDER THE CONFERENCE AND SAID RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSLATIONS LIES WITH CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT. WE SHOULD SIMPLY ACCEPT SECRETARIAT TRANSLATIONS, SINCE

QUESTIONING OF VARIOUS LANGUAGE VERSIONS COULD BRING AN UNRAVELLING OF MANY CSCE AGREEMENTS. (COMMENT: IN VIEW OF LENGTHY CATALOGUE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RUSSIAN AND OTHER LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF TEXTS AGREED THUS FAR (SEE GENEVA 7262), WE BELIEVE THIS SOVIET REACTION IS PREVIEW OF A SERIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH CSCE WILL FACE TOWARD CLOSE OF STAGE II.)

6. PEACEFUL CHANGE -- IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION, KOVALEV ASKED US TO CLEAR UP THE "MYSTERY" AS TO WHERE NEGOTIATIONS ON PEACEFUL CHANGE LANGUAGE WOULD BE CONDUCTED. WE REPLIED THAT WE HAD BEEN TOLD THEY WOULD BE HANDLED THROUGH SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. KOVALEV SAID THIS POINT HAD NEVER BEEN CLARIFIED FOR SOVIETS, AND THAT SOVIET DELEGATION THOUGHT IT WOULD BE NEGOTIATED WITH USDEL IN GENEVA.

7. SOVIET REP AT STAGE III-- IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION, KOVALEV ALLUDED TO THE FACT THAT FINAL CSCE DOCUMENTS WOULD BE SIGNED AT STAGE III BY SOVIET "CHIEF OF STATE". THIS WAS FIRST TIME SOVIETS HAVE USED SUCH PHRASEOLOGY WITH US. HERETOFORE THEY HAVE SAID SIMPLY THAT STAGE II WOULD BE "AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL."

8. ATMOSPHERE OF LUNCHEON WAS POSITIVE, AND DESPITE THEIR HARD LINE SOVIETS WERE RELAXED AND FRIENDLY. DALE

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